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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000033

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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (01/08): President Abbas says he is still waiting to see reported US peace plan

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Main Stories:  
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The dailies lead with news on the US exerting intensified and high level efforts to resume peace talks between the Palestinians and Israelis that will lead to a final agreement within two years. In related news, the dailies report that Special Envoy George Mitchell said in an interview on the Charlie Rose show that peace negotiations should take no more than two years once they begin. He added that he plans to return to the region in the coming days in hopes of pushing the talks forward. Al-Quds reports on Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas saying that the Palestinians have not seen the US plan.

The dailies front page news on settlers from the Yitzhar settlement attacking Palestinian properties in the village of Bureen in south Nablus and cutting down more than 20 olive trees. The lead photos show a Palestinian woman screaming after the attack.

The local press reports on Israel's military confirming that its warplanes carried out a series of raids on military sites throughout Gaza late Thursday night, resulting in the death of one Palestinian and injuring others.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other six ministers agreed that Israel will continue the negotiation with Hamas regarding the prisoner exchange deal. According to Israeli reports, Netanyahu is reluctant to make a decision about the deal.

The three dailies front page news that Israel complained to the US about the PA honoring individuals who committed attacks against Israelis. An anonymous senior Israeli official noted that Israel expressed its concern about the "incitement" that the PA is carrying

out against it.

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BLOCK QUOTE:  
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Ibrahim Shaban, writing in Al-Quds under the title "PR and Diplomatic Noise, Not More" believes that the current efforts by all parties claiming to push the peace process forward are not more than public relations and media strategies to pretend that there is hope in improving the situation. In Shaban's opinion, peace negotiations will never succeed with the continued settlement activities and Israeli attacks against the Palestinians.

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Palestinian Cyberspace:  
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This week, Palestinian cyberspace focused on the updates on the "Viva Palestina" march to Gaza and speculation of a new Israeli offensive on Gaza.

Several blogs and news sites are warning of a new Israeli military operation on Gaza. Video blog "Palestine Vlog" carried a report under the title "Israeli war games eye Gaza Occupation: Tanks enter Jabalia & leaflets on Gaza City."

Social Media carried reports on several airstrikes launched by Israeli warplanes on the Gaza Strip. It also circulated reports on the Israeli Defense Forces training and preparation for another military campaign.

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